YOUNG MEN AND MAIDENS.

LOCISA M. ALCOTT'S SENSIBLE ADVICE ON

LOVE AFFAIRS AND MARRIAGE. It is thought so "pretty and romantic," to see, youths and maidens pair off like birds in spring time, with all the pleasant excitement of bridal veils, wedding bells and honeymoon trips, that it is small wonder the ignorant and innocent creatures take the plunge with smiling faces and are awakened from their dream by finding the water cold, the tide strong and the rocks sharp under the sunny, blue waves that seemed ready to float them to the Islands of the Blest.

Many of us know the sad ending of such seemingly happy matches, and the thoughtful observer can but wonder why they are permitted by those who should be the first to guard the sons and daughters whom they love, against such a rash step, no matter what the temptation may be. This fact was deeply impressed upon me some years ago by two weddings which I witnessed one bright May morning. Both were fashionable, gay and splendid, the brides young and lovely, the grooms handsome men, one just of age, the other evidently still sowing his wild oats, and this wedding was but another handful gaily planted to bring a bitter harvest. Troops of friends surrounded the happy pairs, and all that money, taste, sunshine and good will could do to give grace and

beauty to the scene. I did not know either pair, and as we went along the street gay with the brilliant bustle of the departing crowd I said to the friend who had invited me to enjoy the spectacle always attractive to a woman:

"Happy the bride the sun shines on' seems singularly appropriate to day, for these young people appear to have all that is supposed to be needed for a prosperous start on the journey

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"I don't want to croak, like a bird of evil omen, but I predict that neither of these marriages will turn out well," answered my friend, with a sigh.

"Why not?" I asked, curiously, as I watched a carriage load of bridesmaids drive by looking like a nosegay of snowdrops in their dainty white select your friends with care. Avoid

"In one case they are too young. Twenty-one and eighteen, and have known each other but six months. What can such children guess of the life before them, and how fit are they for the responsibilities they have blind ly assumed? They are not suited to one another and will find it out too late I fear. The older pair are in a still sadder strait, for that innocent girl is sacrificed to gratify the ambition of her parents and to calm the anxiety of his, by trying to save him from destruction. He has led a wild life since he was a boy, and must be settled before it is too late, and so this bribe to virtue, and goes to her doom like a lamb to the slaughter, while the world looks on without open protest, friends congratulate, and the priest blesses this wicked sacrilege. Ah, well, God's law cannot be broken without atonement, and the penalty will yet be paid! Only the heaviest suffering often falls upon the least

guilty offender." The wise old woman's prophecy proved true, for when I met her a few years later and naturally recalled the gay May morning, she told me that the younger pair were divorced after two years of wretchedness. The other case was sadder still, for the pretty bride was dead and the young man was in an insane asylum. Both had found out all too late how easy it was to take this step, how bitter the retribution for breaking the divine law which makes marriage a sacrament, not a bargain, a sacrifice nor a specta

I never forgot the episode, and have preached many a sermon to my young friends since with those weddings for my text and illustration.

Another and happier pair whose story I love to tell, for years of beautiful wedded life points the moral and proves it true, waited two years to know one another thoroughly, and to be ready in all ways for the union which binds for better or worse, in this world and perhaps in the world to come. Then they married on an income of \$600, and, contenting them selves with two pleasant rooms, lived like a pair of turtle doves; or better still, a busy, loving man and wife, each doing his or her part toward increas ing the income, glad to work up hand in hand, growing nearer and dearer as they bore their sorrows and earned their successes together. Through the week they could see but little of one another, the husband being in his of fice, the wife absorbed in her babies, for she took entire care of them herself, and hired other work which could better bear neglect or delay. But Sunday was a family festival, in the good old fashioned way, to thank God for his many mercies, chief among them the blessings of home and love, they read studied or walked with the little ones, resting and refreshing weary souls and bodies with the sweet cordial of fresh air and domestic peace, so preparing to face the week's work with new courage and good cheer.

A rich, childless friend, who had married for money and found misery, asked this richer woman what kept her always so serene, contented and happy in spite of her poverty and many cares. With a smile and a glance about the humble room where the rosy babies played, she answered briefly: "Plenty of love and work, sunshine

and little children." It was a whole sermon in a sen tence, and told the secret of a happy home most eloquently.

There are many such homes, and there might be more if people could be brought to believe in the genuine article, and not try to content them, selves with the shadow when the substance is so simple, so substantial, and

so possible for all who really desire and

Dear young men and maids, let one who, in the capacity of teacher, nurse, friend or author, has been much be hind the scenes for 50 years, assure you that the secret of success lies with yourselves as men and women now, and in God's good time as the fathers and mothers of the coming generation. Let it be a stronger, wiser, and hap pier one than the present, and in fitting yourselves for the high duty of continuing the race, remember that self knowledge, self control, self help are all important and all possible you begin early, learn patiently, and practise devoutly these lessons with out which life is a failure, a burden

Boys, for such I love to call you, and such most of you are till five and twenty, set up a high standard of manhood and never tire of trying to reach it. Don't begin your day with a cigar and end it in a theatre, billiard room or club room. Learn to take pleasure temperately and so keep the power of enjoyment fresh and strong. Seek the society of wise men and good wo men, and be sure the taste for wisdom and virtue will grow by what it feeds on. All things influence the young for good or ill; choose the best and let it teach you the true conduct of life as naturally as sun and rain nourish a young tree. "Keep innocency, for at the end it shall profit thy soul much and open heaven to thee." Never believe the pernicious saying that "Young men must sow wild oats." All men may sow good seed if they will, and

reap honor, happiness and peace in stead of the bitter crop so many mourn over when the harvest comes. Keep a clean mind, a brave spirit and a tender heart, then you will have the right to ask some sweet woman to cast in her lot with yours and make life rich and happy. Girls, don't be in haste to wed Build up healthy bodies by good food plenty of exercise and sleep. Learn all the useful household arts before you attempt to make a home. Culti vate your minds with the best books that you may be able to teach your children much that school-training alone could never give you. Choose

your amusements wisely, for youth must have pleasure, but need not waste itself in harmful frivolity. Above all, girls who live only for fashion, flirtation and enjoyment, and use the privilege all women may claim to decline the acquaintance of young men whose lives will not bear inspection by the innocent eyes of women. Let no delusion of wealth, rank, comeliness or love tempt you to trust your happiness to such an one. Watch and wait till the true lover comes, even if it be all your life, for single blessedness is far better than double misery and wrong. Spinsters are a very useful, happy, independent race, never more so than now when all professions are open to them, and honor, fame and fortune are bravely won by many gifted memhere of the sisterhood Set your standard high, and live up to it, sure

to your real needs. Trust God to shape your life for you, and do not rashly thwart the wise Power who knows our wants and gives us the help we need if we will only ac cept it; who makes it possible for a human being to bring gain out of seeming loss and strength from sacrifice when we learn that this life is but a page of the divine book, and remember that immortality waits for us when this lesson is rightly comprehended. and the second of these is the key

that the reward will come, here or

hereafter, and in the form best suited

Birth, marriage and death are three solemn mysteries given us to study which solves the problem of the other two, since well born children and true wedded love will help us to bless and save this world and send us rejoicing to receive our reward in the next.

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The Annual Meeting of The Essex County Building and Loan Association will be held in Unaugst Hall, Tuesday, October 18th, at 8 P. M., to receive the report of the Treasurer, the election of four Directors for three years, and election of one shareholder (not a Director) as a member of the Auditing Committee for one year, the payment of dues, and the transaction of any other business that may come before the meeting. Nominations for Directors will close at 8,30.

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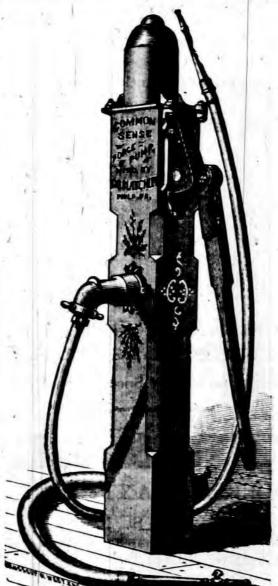
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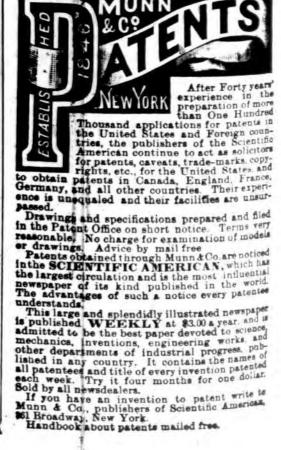
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